

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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RUSSO-US MIL-TO-MIL ENGAGEMENTS:  
RUSSIAN VALUES AND US STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE  
EFFICACY

by

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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Brian Carr is a US Air Force aviator assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. He also received a Master's of Science in International Relations from Troy State University in 1999 and a Master's of Science degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2005. He earned his pilot wings in 1993 and has over 2,700 flying hours in the T-37, T-38, UH-1, and F-16. He has been stationed abroad in Japan, Korea, Greece, Iraq, and Germany and is a graduated squadron commander.



## Abstract

In support of Department of Defense (DoD) and theater objectives, Combatant Commands (COCOMs) conduct Military-to-Military (M2M) training with partner countries in their area of responsibility. United States (US) European Command (EUCOM) had experienced a period of poor relations with Russia in the mid 2000's, but reinvigorated the M2M program following Presidents Medvedev and Obama's "reset" in relations. Three years after the reset, EUCOM has observed that the M2M execution rate remains low (averaging 44%) and has raised the question if the US is making progress in terms of achieving end-states or if the Command is just doing the same things repeatedly for the sake of engagement.

The disconnect between the plan and outcomes is rooted in two issues. First, EUCOM lacks a structured intellectual mechanism by which to predict Russian interests in cooperation (i.e. outcomes) and second, EUCOM over-emphasizes volume of engagement as the primary metric of M2M success. Rather, the solution to both of these issues is to build an outcome focused work plan based on a thorough and contemporary understanding of Russian values.

This research highlights three Russian cultural traits, as examples of the type of knowledge EUCOM planners need to possess in order to design meaningful work plans: 1) Understand the importance of prestige to Russian decision making, 2) recognize Russia does not perceive commitments to obligations in the same way as the US, and 3) appreciate that although Russians embrace closer ties with the West, they simultaneously fear a change to their distinct Russian identity and that they may be perceived as dependent on Western assistance.

This paper advocates a four-step approach to improving EUCOM work plan efficacy.

1. Establish a robust staff process to develop Russo-savvy planners.
2. Readdress the development of the work plan, with an expectation-based approach towards engagement selection.
3. Track the outcomes of engagements (in order to make a quality assessment of each M2M activity)
4. "Advertise" M2M outcomes (as opposed to number of engagements)

Initially this approach to work plan development will require additional time and resources, as well as curtail the volume of engagements, especially as compared to contemporary rates. However, this research suggests the benefits of a cyclical application of the above four-step process will become self-reinforcing over time, and allow planners to select those venues that are both most likely to be executed and that maximize benefits to EUCOM.

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the United States and the Russian Federation entered a period of increasingly tense and deteriorating affairs, culminating with the Russian invasion of the Republic of Georgia. In mid-2009, in an effort to reverse that negative trend, the newly elected US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced a “reset” in relations.<sup>1</sup> United States European Command (EUCOM), the Combatant Command (COCOM) in whose area of responsibility Russia lies, embraced the reset as an opportunity to reengage a country perceived as neglected by the US, yet one of EUCOM’s top priority nations. As prescribed in the September 2009 reset-driven Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), EUCOM and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) published bilateral work plans detailing annual military-to-military (M2M) engagements focusing on specific areas of mutual interest.

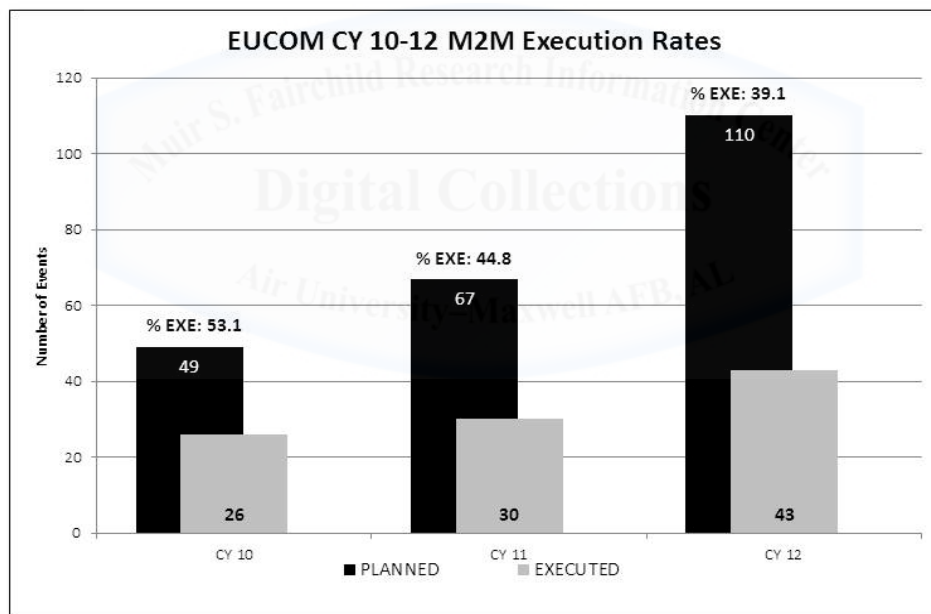
However, the execution of the three annual work plans since the reset (calendar years 2010, 2011, and 2012) have been far less successful than EUCOM expected. Recognizing this problem and hoping to seek solutions, EUCOM’s planning directorate (ECJ5 or J5) solicited the joint academic community for help determining where the US is making progress in terms of achieving end states or if, “we are just doing the same things over and over again for the sake of engagement.”<sup>2</sup> A review of that question with respect to ECJ5’s planning process leads to the observation that EUCOM lacks an outcome-based approach to work plan construction and is over-emphasizing the metric *quantity* to measure M2M success. In the closing remarks of a report from *The Commission on US Policy toward Russia*, the authors noted, “American policies formulated without a good understanding of Russian perspectives are less likely to succeed in their intended goals and are therefore less desirable.”<sup>3</sup> Utilizing a planner-focused approach to understanding Russian cultural values, EUCOM can shift to a *quality*-based assessment, which will serve to target resources and improve the efficacy of the M2M relationship.

The work plan has become a cornerstone of foreign relations for the Department of Defense (DoD) in recent years. M2M activities are a pillar of engagement for the purposes of:

- 1) Building defense relationships that promote specific US security interests.
- 2) Developing allied and partner military capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations, including allied transformation.
- 3) Improving information exchange and intelligence sharing to harmonize views on security challenges.
- 4) Providing US forces with peacetime and contingency access and en route infrastructure.
- 5) Influencing the development of foreign military institutions and their roles in democratic societies.<sup>4</sup>

Russo-US M2M activity had been growing prior to 2008, but in response to Russia's invasion of the Republic of Georgia that year, EUCOM curtailed M2M activities. The presidential reset resulted in the publication of the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation on Cooperation*, which highlighted the benefits of bilateral military cooperation and specifically outlined mechanisms (joint exercises, conferences, senior leader engagements, etc.) as well as tasks (anti-terrorism, peacekeeping, missile defense, etc.) to be pursued via M2M engagements.<sup>5</sup> EUCOM Commander General Gantz J. Craddock emphasized in the EUCOM 2009 Posture Statement that, "The greatest challenge which affects the entire region is how we engage with Russia," and subsequent posture statements listed Russia as one of four priority countries in the 51-nation EUCOM area of responsibility.<sup>6</sup> In 2009 in anticipation of the MOU, J5 planners authored a framework document to resume military-to-military cooperation with Russia, followed by the restoration of the 2010 (previously cancelled) jointly crafted annual military-to-military work plan. In line with the renewed engagement focus, the next three years saw increasing DoD stress on the importance of working with Russia, which led to significant growth in the size of the M2M work plan.

Evidence of the DoD's emphasis on engagement and the subsequent growth of M2M activities is pervasive across government publications and guidance. For example, in US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul's "reset" address to the Moscow Higher School of Economics in May 2012 he noted, "increased engagement is the means to produce Win-Win outcomes".<sup>7</sup> Likewise, in the *US~Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission 2012 Joint Report*, the authors highlight both the 51 completed EUCOM M2M engagements in 2011 and the expected growth to over 100 events for 2012.<sup>8</sup> These two examples are typical of both the governmental emphasis on more engagement, as well as the institutional preference to showcase the number of engagements as evidence of progress.



**Figure 1. EUCOM CY 10-12 Military-to-Military Training Execution Rates.**

Despite both nations' expansion of the M2M work plan as directed by their respective national leaders, success as currently defined has been elusive. Figure 1 charts the number of Calendar Year 2010-2012 (CY10-12) work plan events scheduled and executed, as well as the corresponding rate of execution for each year since the reset. The data indicates a moderate

increase in the number of events which were carried to fruition each of the last three years (CY10 - 26, CY11 - 30, & CY12 - 43), but that increase is not keeping on pace with the increasing number of scheduled engagements (49, 67, & 110) thus, the execution *rate* is notably trending downward.<sup>9</sup>

Both parties anticipate some level of execution below 100% due to routine and contingency requirements necessitating cancellations. However, EUCOM's question concerning the health of the program indicates they believe the three-year execution rate average of a 44% is below what they consider effective. The source of the disconnect between the number of events that the Kremlin and EUCOM agree to accomplish, and the actual number of events carried to completion, is rooted in two issues: a lack of an expectation-based planning approach and a command focus on the value of quantifiable data. The first problem arises because there are no good tools or rubrics to guide ECJ5 in either the selection or expected value of specific engagement activities. Lacking a discrete planning tool, staffs tend to expand the number of engagement opportunities over time, under the notion that, if for no other reason, engagement builds trust, cooperation, and connectivity that fosters strong future relationships. Indicative of this trend, in late December 2012, the CY13 work plan was headed towards more than 150 events, but a recent setback in relations with the MoD has pared that number back down closer to 100.<sup>10</sup>

With respect to the second problem, ECJ5 documents, EUCOM reports, and US government publications support the observation that the number of M2M engagements are the primary measure of M2M health. Although reporting the number of successful events may be understandable from a staffing perspective (ease of measure, discretely quantifiable, useful for documenting trends, guidance recommends more engagement, etc.), there is little evidence of a



direct link between increased volume and an improved M2M relationship. However, as expressed in ECJ5's problem statement, in light of current resource constraints EUCOM cannot afford to continue to invest in efforts with marginal or unknown payoffs. It is this concern that motivates a search for a mechanism that can aid planning staffs in assessing specific engagement value.

The tempo of Russo-US relations follows an expected cycle of natural peaks and valleys as a function of current events and the execution of each nation's foreign policy. However, reactive planning is inherently difficult and inefficient; therefore what planners need is an approach that anticipates how nations will respond. Russia, like most states, behaves in a manner consistent with what they value, and a better understanding of those values will allow EUCOM to migrate the development and management of the M2M program from a *quantitative* to a *qualitative* approach.

This is not to imply that the current process does not consider Russian values. Some themes of the Kremlin's decision-making process are commonly deliberated over during European Command's planning cycle. Examples of topics routinely considered by EUCOM with respect to Russian values include common concerns over domestic terror, Moscow's slow or negligent execution of administrative support, and the importance to Russia of engagement at an appropriate peer level. However, to achieve success in understanding Russian approaches, EUCOM must go beyond considering universally recognized values and instead immerse their planning personnel in a focused regional study environment. Detailed herein are three characteristics of Russian strategic culture that may help explain why there has been a low work plan execution rate: 1) Russian prestige seeking, 2) caveated commitment to obligations, and 3) the preservation of Russian uniqueness.

More so than other countries in the EUCOM theater, Russia is a distinctive partner in stature, global role, geography, and especially behavior. Because of this, policies that lump Russia in with other European Union (EU) nations are perceived as offensive to Russians.<sup>11</sup> Moscow is insulted that as a great power their MoD is not afforded peer status to deal directly with the US DoD and has EUCOM (a COCOM) as an interface for M2M activities. A former US attaché to Russia recalled that the Kremlin once refused to sign a work plan, because the respective signature blocks on the document were for the Russian MoD and EUCOM. The Kremlin refused to back down and EUCOM was compelled to garner the Joint Staff's signature (and organizational seal) on the work plan before Russian representatives would sign.<sup>12</sup> This issue is rooted in Russian leadership's focus on prestige. Moscow views national respect as a key element of great-power status, and the lynchpin to defend and pursue future interests, ensure security, and growth in the years to come.<sup>13</sup> The MoD versus EUCOM example is characteristic of the last twenty years for Russians, who perceive a lack of respect from the West as a poignant reminder of Russia's humiliation following the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> The prestige issue leaves Moscow in a balancing act, attempting to perform on the world stage at the level of a "great" power, while not being seen as subservient to Western interests but also leaving open the option for Moscow to shy away from issues that tarnish their self-perceived international image. It is in light of the importance of national prestige to Russia's ruling elite that seemingly unexplainable Russian actions/reactions gain some clarity.

Moscow's expression of anger in response to supposed slights against Russia's international position are reflected in the Kremlin's efforts to reestablish status, and may be accompanied by what political scientists Larson and Shevchenko call "spoiler" behavior. These disproportionate reactions to apparent affronts to Russia's status serve as evidence of the

importance of national prestige to the Russian ruling class. Examples of this “spoiler” behavior include “Russia’s opposition in the 1990s to US intervention in the Balkans and Iraq, as well as its efforts since 2005 to eliminate the US military presence in Central Asia, despite having an interest in a US defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan.”<sup>15</sup> Navigating this characteristic of Russian behavior is challenging, but by finding “ways to recognize their distinctive status and identities”, EUCOM can help shape Russia to be “more likely to participate in global governance.”<sup>16</sup>

The next institutional factor is Russia’s approach to obligations. Moscow does not have a tradition of an “alliance culture” and despite circumstances of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century that have guided them into partnerships, they have done so with extreme caution and many caveats. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, globalization has led Russia towards seeking greater participation in organizations, processes, and institutions that bring respect to the Russian state. However, in line with their historic perspective, the Kremlin does so with low (compared to Western values) concern of actively participating in or abiding to those commitments. Furthermore, when faced with unexpected costs or possible negative outcomes, Russia is comfortable with defaulting to internal interests and defecting from the same relationships they initially sought.<sup>17</sup> Thus, despite the ever-growing spectrum of issues which seem to bring Russia and the US into a closer relationship, “these common interests are insufficient in and of themselves to induce Russia to cooperate with the United States consistently and broadly.”<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, the very activities in which the US wants to engage Russia in order to build capacity or connectivity are often of such marginal capability that the expectation of cooperation may be misplaced. For example, the EU’s attempt to include the Kremlin in conflict prevention and crisis management operations has been largely unsuccessful due to the limited physical and

organizational capabilities of Russian governmental organizations, leading to the observation that, “in its present form and quality, this system allows for very limited and often mutually frustrating cooperation.”<sup>19</sup>

In the last decade Russian global participation has grown more robust (New START treaty, WTO ascension, European gas supply negotiations, etc.). However favorable this recent trend appears, one must recall Russia’s turbulent history of invasion, which has led them as a culture to distrust external ties. Russia’s ruling elite has not, “embraced the notions of integration, collective security, and pooled sovereignty” pervasive in the West.<sup>20</sup> Thus, they find themselves torn between seeking the prestige that accompanies global engagement but without incurring the costs of membership that can degrade the domestic perception of the Kremlin’s leadership. Moscow does not necessarily see this approach as a handicap, as this caveated commitment allows Russian leadership strategic room to maneuver, affording them the opportunity to play spoiler by operating outside the normative and institutional bounds of the West when that is seen as more advantageous than meeting implied or contractual obligations.<sup>21</sup>

Bridging the “prestige” and caveated commitment factors is Russia’s love-hate relationship with the West in general and America specifically. Culturally, Russians have been enamored with the US for half a century (think blue jeans, McDonald’s, or rock and roll), and after the implosion of the Soviet Union there was an increased interest among Russians in democratic capitalism and how it may or may not work for the Russian state. But,

Russia’s history works to prevent Russians from embracing the West, although improved relations are precisely the key to overcoming its backwardness. Russia’s backwardness led to contradictory desires to catch up to the West while maintaining its uniqueness. This struggle between modernizing and conserving the empire produced an almost schizophrenic love-hate relationship with the West that continues to plague Russia today.<sup>22</sup>

The paradox of this conflict is especially trying, in that much of what Russia wants and the West would like to offer (such as helping to professionalize their officer corps) the Kremlin fears both for how it may change Russian culture as well as the perception that they are seen as “needing” Western assistance.<sup>23</sup> While Moscow seeks growth and improvement roughly in line with a Western model, they do not want that change to come at the expense of traditional Russian values or political stability, but rather in a way that embraces and maintains Russian uniqueness and domestic support. The desire to selectively embrace some aspects of the West, while eschewing others creates a difficult environment in which to predict Russian expectations with respect to specific engagement venues.

An awareness of the Russian traits and values noted above, as well as others, can serve to provide EUCOM planners with approaches to partnering with Moscow that are more likely to synchronize with the Kremlin’s view of success. That awareness also creates an opportunity for EUCOM to proactively motivate Russian participation in the full M2M work plan, and/or reactively alter Western expectations of a high execution rate. If national prestige is a core tenet of Moscow’s approach to foreign policy, it is essential that the US approach and shape policy in light of that reality. Similarly, US understanding of Moscow’s *laissez-faire* approach to collaboration and a tendency to rebuke institutions and/or mechanisms that steal too much from the Russian identity, begin to scope a framework in which their actions can become less opaque to EUCOM’s planners.

The declining M2M execution rate serves as an example of how understanding Russian values can be useful in a practical sense. The actual number of M2M events successfully executed for each of the last three years (see Figure 1) has increased moderately. However, once the increasing number of scheduled events in each years’ work plan are taken into consideration,

the overall execution rate is clearly trending downward. The declining execution rate in years 2010-2012 suggest a Russian equilibrium or even fatigue regarding the number of M2M activities they are able or interested in executing. Additionally, they may be optimizing limited resources by only participating in a tailored number of engagements. Alternatively, they may be hand-selecting only the most desirable M2M opportunities from the work plan, as there is no penalty for limited participation in the agreed upon schedule of events. An understanding of the Kremlin's focus on prestige or their tendency to marginalize participation in agreements can allow planners to manage US expectations and shift from counting the number of successful engagements towards selecting those engagements with the greatest value.

This leads into the second part of this examination, which addresses EUCOM's focus on quantifiable data. As referenced at the introduction, ECJ5's query, "what types of engagement work" is important in that it highlights that EUCOM recognizes a need to focus on engagement outcomes and not engagement volume. EUCOM has the right goal of trying to determine where the US is making progress in terms of achieving desired end states. However, if planners only pursue those events with expected benefit to US interests, or expand the number of M2M engagements for the sole purpose of improving partnering relationships, they are likely to find Russian commitment to participation will continue to mirror contemporary low success rates.

Indeed, European Command planners are not the only ones struggling with this issue. The EU has one of the broadest relationships with Russia of any other organization or nation. However, they have observed that on many topics their relationship with Russia tends not to be very productive; but the EU has ascribed to the belief that the myriad of ways in which they connect with Moscow are worth fostering for the sake of maintaining and improving the bi-lateral relationship. Yet an improved relationship has not emerged, instead the "institutional

interaction may help sustain an illusion of activity” at the cost of real gains.<sup>24</sup> So at least from the European Union’s perspective, the take-away from this observation is that “engagement for engagement’s sake” is not working.

In light of the recommendation to focus on values, the following four-step process can serve to move EUCOM towards an outcome-based M2M work plan. First, maintain a command environment that focuses on a holistic approach to educating planners on cultural Russian cultural traits that shape policy. Some important mechanisms for developing a Russo-savvy staff include propagating the results of senior leader engagements (out briefs), formal academic education, professional development, personal research and providing regional specialists (desk officers, division chiefs, attachés) the time and resources in the workplace to pursue education and employ their skills. Numerous work place restrictions and distractions make that last item the most challenging to implement, but it is arguably the most critical. This paper has attempted to extract from contemporary research on Russia several unique features that can aid planners in the understanding of Moscow’s stance, but it is also intended to demonstrate the type and depth of knowledge planners can accrue, given the proper workplace environment. This approach of affording staffs the opportunity to stay regularly immersed in news/academia/policy will over the long term significantly enhance their ability to understand and predict the peculiarities of Russian foreign policy decisions.

This observation is not intended to be pejorative of the quality of EUCOM’s Black Sea-Eurasia planning section, but rather to emphasize the vital importance of knowledgeable planners. A proper education-focused planning environment is also necessary because of the mechanism through which planning staffs accrue personnel. Few people arrive at European Command as regional or country experts. Upon an individual’s assignment to a joint

organization the various Directorates in the staff "draft" new personnel based on known or records-based assessments of their skill sets. Frequently this results in a newly assigned officer discovering that he or she is the deputy planner for a country in which he or she has no specific knowledge or experience, simply because their record indicated they were strong performers. Over the course of the following 22 to 36 months, those planners gradually develop expertise of the planning process, knowledge of the target country, and learn the nuances of how to best plan with respect to the focus country. Unfortunately, the individual will move to another job just as their skills and knowledge are reaching functional maturity. The focus herein is not to fix this personnel shortfall. However, given this truth, it serves to emphasize the criticality of planning directorates developing a process whereby new planners rapidly gain practical regional knowledge and then foment an environment that sustains that expertise.

The second step is to utilize those capable planners' skills to develop a more perceptively crafted work plan. From the large list of potential engagements proposed each year, planners can pare the list down to those that subject matter experts expect Moscow will be interested in pursuing, then advocate for those that align with US values and objectives. Aside from the desired end-state of an effective M2M program, there are two near-term costs as part of this approach. First, initial years' work plans will lack depth until the mechanisms recommended here have time to establish an Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) cycle to feed the following years' plans. Second, this approach will curtail growth and result in a significantly smaller work plan than in recent years.

The current work plan process overemphasizes event completion, placing an equal measure of success, for example, on exchanging cadets between national service academies as it does a major bi-lateral naval exercise. This leads to the third step in adding value to the work



plan: moving from tracking *quantity* towards tracking *quality*. The baseline for recording quality already exists in the expanded record-keeping instituted with the 2011 EUCOM work plan. With the addition of a qualitative post-event grading requirement via survey, critique, after-action report and other mechanisms, EUCOM can track engagement outcomes and migrate to the use of quality as the main measure of engagement value.

Assuredly, there are still challenges to instituting this process. What cadet is going to say his/her trip to Moscow was not amazing or how can the staff ensure that the Executive Officer to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provides an assessment of a senior leader engagement? However, none of those challenges inhibit documenting the actual quality of an exchange, and for a relatively small amount of labor, at least some mechanism begins to emerge with which to scope the work plan in light of factual accomplishments. A secondary benefit of this approach is that it will create a statistical data set that follow-on researchers can utilize to address the more challenging issue of which specific engagement types/venues have historically yielded the greatest payoffs and thereby aid in formulating future work plans.

As is especially evident in pre-2011 EUCOM work plan documents, execution rates are the hallmark statistic of advertising the work plan's health. This research has discovered no indication that simply adding more engagement activities translates into better outcomes, and this approach may well be deleterious to overall objectives by focusing on quantity over quality. Staffs may be partly to blame for this bureaucratic behavior as they seek opportunities to show value in their activities by advocating for programmatic growth. This leads to the fourth recommended step: *advertise* quality, not quantity. ECJ5 should eschew the use of the number of engagements or percentage executed as a measure of merit, and in their place substitute outcomes.

Thus rather than simply identifying that a cadet exchange aligns with the MOU criteria of “exchange visits and meetings of leaders at various levels” (or a similar line of activity) planners should outline specific expectations associated with the exchange and after-action reporting should capture how the event succeeded in meeting those goals. Notional outcomes might include Russia agreeing to host a reciprocal visit during the same calendar year, requiring the cadets to collaborate on and publish a research project, or require that the cadet exchange be joined with a senior level Russian leader visit with whom the US has been trying to facilitate a meeting. The after-action process of determining the degree to which specific outlined objectives were achieved as well as organic execution requirements (did the Russians execute on timeline, contribute the resources promised, and designate appropriate ranked individuals to participate?) will allow planners to qualify the value of specific engagements. This data will aid in determining value both with respect to meeting objectives but also in understanding Russian trends in commitment to differing engagement types.

By identifying specific outcomes to EUCOM’s myriad “consumers” (their own Command, partner agencies, Russian counterparts, etc.) EUCOM can iterate the OODA loop as part of their planning cycle. Advertising outcomes will promote discussion, disagreements, and feedback that will help planners to better understand Russian values, US benefits, and disconnects between the two, thereby linking this four-step process tooth-to-tail. Initially, the cost of refocusing planning efforts and reducing the breadth of the work plan may be unsatisfying; however, over the course of a few work plan cycles it will lead to a healthier, more results-focused M2M program in subsequent years.

The intent of this research is to help European Command improve the efficacy of their military-to-military training program. However, the proposed remedy is applicable to any

Combatant Command facing a similar issue with the health of their M2M program. EUCOM faces the dilemma of a bilaterally agreed upon framework directing greater cooperation with Russia, yet notes year-to-year M2M statistics indicating that more engagements haven't equated to more success. This paper finds that disconnect is a function of two trends. First, no outcome-based system exists to guide planners in the selection of engagement venues. This paper therefore suggests that specific M2M activities entered into the work plan be selected not only on the benefit to the US, but also the expectation that they are beneficial to the Kremlin and therefore likely to be executed. The skill sets required to help planners make those types of perceptive engagement recommendations come from a robust understanding of Russian cultural values. Three insights concerning the Kremlin's political culture that may prove helpful in understanding their behavior are; the importance of prestige to Russia's ruling class, Moscow's tendency to marginalize commitment to agreements, and a love-hate relationship with Western cooperation. Collectively these three norms serve as a lens through which to view why Moscow does or does not participate in the full range of scheduled work plan events, and potentially predict which engagements the Kremlin will pursue. In order to build and sustain the skill sets required to plan effectively, planning directorates should actively create workplace mechanisms that build and perpetuate country-specific knowledge for their staffs.

The second trend disconnecting the M2M intent from the M2M success rate lies in that Commands rely on the number of events executed as the primary metric of success. EUCOM has historically advertised "percent executed" as the measure of M2M value, but has observed a declining trend in that metric, with additional doubts about the quality of those events that do come to fruition. EUCOM should migrate away from quantity, and replace quality as the measure of health of Russo-US military-to-military engagement. This move will necessitate

additional record keeping and an outcomes-based approach to work plan selection, which can work synergistically over time to pare down the work plan to those events which are truly beneficial to both Russia and the US as well as likely to be executed.

The efforts required by COCOM staffs to refocus their planners as country experts, and sustain those perishable skills, will not be easy in today's resource constrained environment. However, the long-term benefits of a more narrowly executed, but outcome-based work plan should go far in maximizing limited resources across the spectrum of engagement and address COCOM concerns that simple expansion of the military-to-military program is not the path to success.



## NOTES

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